



Idaho Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter (left), with INL Director John Grossenbacher, was among 250 guests commemorating the outstanding achievements of INL scientists, engineers and technicians at INL's 14th Annual Honors Banquet. Photo by Dennis Hammon.

Idaho Governor honors INL inventors at annual banquet

By [Michelle Blacker](#), *INL Communications & Governmental Affairs*

Awards season in eastern Idaho has nothing to do with Golden Globes, Grammys or Oscars. Among Idaho National Laboratory employees, late January is synonymous with the annual Honors Banquet, a special night set aside to honor INL scientists, engineers and technicians for outstanding achievements during the past year.

On Jan. 29, more than 250 guests descended on an Idaho Falls hotel to commemorate INL's 14th Annual Honors Banquet.

A number of special guests — Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter and First Lady Lori Otter, Rick Defieux of Battelle Ventures, and Idaho Falls Mayor Jared Fuhrman — were on hand to celebrate and congratulate the honorees.

As guest speaker for the banquet, Otter emphasized the importance of having a place where innovation can occur. He also thanked INL for assisting Idaho in becoming a leading state in the number of patents per capita.



Blaine Grover received a Laboratory Director's Award for Individual Lifetime Achievement in Science and Technology.



To see all the inventors who were recognized, view the [patents video](#).

"I count you among the brightest and biggest stars we have in the state of Idaho," Otter told the researchers in the crowd. "I can tell you, I'm counting on you. And if we work together, we will do what is right for the state of Idaho and we will continue to shine."

And shine they did. The first awards of the night honored those who were named on U.S. patents in 2009. INL is the only national laboratory to recognize lifetime achievements for inventors who accrue five, 10, 15 and 20 U.S. patented inventions. INL chemist Daniel Ginosar was elevated to the 15-patent level this year, while two others — Terry Todd and Terry Turner — reached the 10-patent level. David Dahl, Timothy McJunkin, Michael McKellar and Jill Scott were inducted into INL's "Hall of Fame" for being named on five U.S. patents.

INL also named winners of the Laboratory Director's Awards for Exceptional Achievement in engineering, science and lifetime achievement. These included Steve Herrmann for engineering achievement, Bruce Mincher for scientific achievement and Blaine Grover for individual lifetime achievement in science and technology.

The most anticipated awards for the evening were for Inventor of the Year and Technician of the Year, which are announced the night of the banquet. The Inventor of the Year recognizes the performance of a scientist or engineer who had an outstanding year. This award was presented to Robert Fox for his development of Precision Nanoparticles, a technology that could vastly improve the efficiency of solar power.

For the finale, the Technician of the Year was announced. Chris Morgan, INL's only staff photographer and videographer, received this award. For more than 25 years, his work has shined a light on nearly every part of the laboratory to increase its visibility.

The honorees also received a total of \$105,000 as part of their achievement awards. These special awards are funded from licensing agreements that provide royalty income to the laboratory. Efforts to advance and license technologies created at INL continue to pay dividends for the inventors and the laboratory.

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Robert Fox was named

***2009's Inventor of the Year
for his development of
Precision Nanoparticles
technology. Photo by
Dennis Hammon.***